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WORCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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A Warm Welcome to New Members

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Neither the Committee of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society nor the Editor is responsible for any statements or opinions expressed in the Worcestershire Recorder, the authors of the contributions alone being responsible for the same.

Cover illustration: John Roe's 1799 watercolour of Pershore Abbey, one of nearly 50,000 images from King George III's topographical collection released into the public domain by the British Library in 2021 (see p. 8).

Chair's Letter

Dear Members,

Winter is coming - but thankfully the great programme of lectures provided by our Meetings Secretary, James Dinn, will continue to provide some bright spots. The first three lectures of the 2021/22 series were given by Chris Pickford on *Worcestershire Church Bells - Craftsmanship and Sound*, Nick Molyneux on W*estwood House, Droitwich: Sir John 'Lusty' Packington and his Grand Design*, and Nina O'Hare on *Growth in the Vale: Hidden Tales of Market Gardening*.

As I write, the number of people in the UK with COVID-19 is increasing and it seems likely that many of the programmed lectures will be via Zoom. As is the case with many other societies who have provided this service, the numbers of members attending online are larger than those who previously attended in person. Because of this, it would seem sensible to continue this facility even when we can return to meeting in person. When we can meet again we are hoping to increase the number, or type, of events open to members. Please contact me with any ideas you may have for get-togethers which members and their friends might enjoy.

The best news for a long time is that the Small Pits Big Ideas II project led by our Secretary, Dr Bob Ruffle, has started. Bob has produced a short summary for this Recorder, but I wanted to add some of the comments from participants who attended the first two days at Beoley:

'Just wanted to say what a wonderfully organised historical adventure. I loved every minute of it, even despite the rain. I had the pleasure of not only digging but being a part of the finds team. A memorable experience that exceeded my expectations. A big thank you to you and your team.'

'We would love to be involved in future digs etc so please keep us on the list. We really enjoyed the weekend thanks so much'

'Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the dig with my children. We thoroughly enjoyed it and it sparked a real interest especially in my youngest daughter who hasn't stopped asking questions all evening. We had a fantastic test pit location which added to the experience. Thanks to all the team that helped us too, they were always happy to help and answered any questions we had.'

'I would definitely be keen to volunteer on further digs and would also be happy to volunteer for other activities if needed.'

The Committee have not been taking it easy in 2021, and earlier this year we developed a draft vision of Worcestershire Archaeological Society as we would want it to be in 2026. We started this off by focusing on what we would be doing, who we would be working with, and how we wanted to be viewed by our members and the wider community.

Using this, we will create a five year business plan to ensure we make the changes we know are necessary to enable WAS to thrive. This is a challenge, but in September we were successful in our application to Heritage Compass, a Business Support Programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. It is designed to grow resilience and invigorate the heritage sector across England. We do not get any money, but will benefit from two years of free training, mentoring and peer learning, allowing us to develop a clear business plan, a developed income strategy, and the tools and knowledge to respond to our specific needs and challenges.

I am sure you have ideas for where you would like Worcestershire Archaeological Society to be in 2026, and I would be very grateful if you would share them with me.

News

Archaeology cut from the University of Worcester

On 17 August the University of Worcester announced its decision to cease offering degrees in archaeology after the 2021/22 academic year. The move ends two decades of outstanding teaching and research, and has been condemned by national organisations including the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Council for British Archaeology. An online petition opposing the decision has received more than 10,000 signatures at the time of writing, and can be signed at https://bit.ly/3DQlR49.

Small Pits, Big Ideas finally on its way!

Bob Ruffle

After the delay caused by Covid-19 lockdowns, the Society's Heritage Lottery funded project to dig test pits in six Worcestershire communities finally got underway in October. The original timetable for the project had to be revised and the agreement of the National Lottery Heritage Fund secured to a new completion date in March 2023. The first two events were planned for October this year, with the remaining four taking place in Spring and Summer 2022. Many members will recall the talk given to us in September 2018 by Professor Carenza Lewis, in which she described the methodology she has used so successfully in East Anglia to answer questions about the development of inhabited villages where extensive research excavation is not possible.

On the first weekend in October 13 test pits were dug in Beoley, just north of Redditch. Although the weather was very unkind to us on the first day, we had enthusiastic support from local people and plenty of volunteers of all ages took part. The finds are still being processed, but the first impression is that the present village centre is a largely post-medieval development. In the last week of October two more days were spent digging eight further pits in White Ladies Aston, just to the east of Worcester, to add to the eight dug there during our pilot project in 2017/18. As I write, the finds are already washed and await further processing. Analysis of these and the Beoley material will get going soon, with the expectation that community events reporting on initial findings can take place in the New Year. Similar two-day events are being planned for Badsey, Bewdley, Wichenford and Wolverley in 2022.

We should record our deepest thanks to Nina O'Hare and her colleagues from the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service for their hard work and commitment to the project, but most of all to all those volunteers who have willingly turned out and contributed to what is proving to be a great contribution to community archaeology in Worcestershire.

Excavations in Ombersley

Margaret Burrows and Francesca Llewellyn, North Worcestershire Archaeology Group

Since the easing of Covid rules, the North Worcestershire Archaeology Group (NWAG) has spent the summer excavating test pits on a site in Ombersley. They were invited by the owners, who had already found many domestic artefacts while gardening.

The test pits were strategically placed around the sloping field and, so far, the results have shown that the site could be divided into three parts. The lower part had depositions overlaying the natural which came from the nearby stream, while the higher part came from flood wash and silt from adjoining fields. The latter could be divided into two parts: one near the house and the other along the nearby road, where there were fewer finds.

The finds both pre-dated and post-dated 1850, and were mostly of a domestic and agricultural nature. They included clay tobacco pipe pieces and a piece of possible medieval pottery, as well as post-medieval and modern pottery, glass, metalwork, and tiles. Several flints were also found, some of which date from the Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods.

Queen Anne ring acquired by Museums Worcestershire

Deborah Fox, Museums Worcestershire

This beautiful gold ring is one of Museums Worcestershire's newest acquisitions. It dates to the late 1600s or early 1700s, and carries an orange glass intaglio. The female bust is shown wearing low-cut drapery with her hair tied up loosely with a bow, a lock of hair falling across her shoulder onto her chest. The figure closely resembles Queen Anne, who reigned as Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1702 until her death in 1714. Readers might have seen the monarch depicted as a dramatically unstable character in the award-winning film *The Favourite*, but in reality the Queen left a lasting mark on the UK during her reign, overseeing the formation of Great Britain in the Act of Union, uniting England and Scotland into one state.

Significant Worcester buildings like the Guildhall and the Commandery were built or remodelled in the Queen Anne style. Her statue stands above the Guildhall's entrance and her portrait hangs inside. At the Commandery, her legacy is demonstrated in the Queen Anne wing of the building, which still bears her name over 300 years after her death.

The ring is probably a piece of mourning jewellery, worn in memory of someone who has died. It was discovered by a metal detectorist in 2018 and reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The age and precious metal content of the find means that it has been declared Treasure under the terms of the Treasure Act 1996, and Museums Worcestershire are delighted to acquire it so that it can be preserved and enjoyed by the public. It is hoped that the ring will be displayed at The Commandery in the near future.

Recent deposits of material in Worcestershire Archives

Dr Adrian Gregson, County and Diocesan Archivist

While the last 12 months have been challenging for all of us, we have still received nearly 90 deposits of archives during that time. A note of perhaps the more interesting collections is given below:

BA16477 Records of Phepsons Farm Orchard 19th and 20th century

BA16484 Worcester Twinning Assn First World War Gouzeaucourt Project archive

BA16502 Personal papers of Sir Peter Luff

BA16537 Royal British Legion Women's Section

BA16560 Housman correspondence

BA16569 Papers re. founding of Worcester Branch Social Democratic Party

We have also had a succession of health-related records, including items from Powick Hospital, nurses' registers, and Mental Health records, prompted by our cataloguing project which has been funded by the Wellcome Trust over the last two years.

With the grateful assistance of our Friends organisation we have been able to acquire a few things at auction including a Pipe Roll of Fleetwood Pankhurst, 1792; a map of Childswickham 1870; and an estate plan of Flyford Flavell 1822.

Obviously not all of these archives will be immediately fully open to the public.

Getting under the surface: the hidden secrets of 'Mary Queen of Scots'

Kate Banner, Museums Worcestershire

This English School oil painting on panel belongs to one of the earliest and most cohesive collections within the Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum's fine art store, featuring portraits of many historical characters including Henry VIII and Erasmus. One of 26 artworks donated to the Worcester Natural Society in 1850 by Reverend George Downing Bowles, the subject of this work is thought to be Mary Queen of Scots.

For decades, the portrait has been obscured from full view, covered in facing paper designed to protect the image. However, funding from the Leche Trust enabled long-awaited conservation work to take place in 2020-21, revealing the portrait in all its glory. After removing the facing paper the conservator was able to painstakingly remove the layer of varnish on the surface, a process which helps to show the paint colours the way they were intended by the artist. The first image here shows the portrait half-way through this process - you can see how much brighter the colours on the right side of the painting are.

Conservation work also established that many details including the orb, sceptre, crucifix and hat were in fact later 19th century additions. The sitter originally held a fan in her right hand, which was likely painted over just before the additions were

made. You may be able to see evidence of this process in the second image as the paint used to cover the fan has become transparent and changed colour with age.

Support from West Midlands Museum Development's 'Expert Eye' programme has also provided further insight into this and other works in the Bowles collection. Research experts suggest that 'Mary Queen of Scots' was originally a portrait of a high-ranking Netherlandish lady, completed in the early 17th century.

Conserving Samurai Armour

Museums Worcestershire

Earlier in the year, Museums Worcestershire's curators sent Japanese Samurai armour from our collection off to Drakon Heritage and Conservation for some well needed TLC. We have just received the armour back, and are amazed by Pieta Greaves' conservation. The armour was very dirty, so it all benefitted from a deep clean. Scratches were removed and the chest and back pieces were stabilised. The helmet had sustained a large crack, so that was filled in and coloured. New but sympathetic toggles were replaced for those that were missing - these are needed to put the armour together - and a new mount was produced for the armour to go on display.

The armour will be on display at Worcester City Art Gallery from April 2022 as part of a major new exhibition, *Hokusai's Great Wave: Reflections of Japan in Worcester*. We explore the extraordinary influence of Japanese art and culture in the West, bringing together for the first time outstanding Japanese prints and Samurai armour from the Museums Worcestershire's collection, alongside Hokusai's Great Wave, and beautiful pieces from the Tate and Museum of Royal Worcester.

Worcestershire Research Framework for the Historic Environment

Earlier this year the Worcestershire HER launched a new website for the Worcestershire Research Framework for the Historic Environment. Funded by Historic England, the website aims to co-ordinate and promote research into Worcestershire's historic landscape and built environment, and will be of interest to academics, contractors, voluntary groups, and individual researchers working in the county. The website (https://researchframeworks.org/worcs/) is a work-in-progress, and user feedback is welcomed!

Digitisation of George III's topographical collection

In early July the British Library released into the public domain 32,000 images of maps and views from King George III's topographical collection, building on an earlier release of 17,000

images in October 2020. Accessible via the British Library's Explore catalogue (http://explore.bl.uk/) or the image sharing website Flickr (https://bit.ly/2Ydl2mz), the collection contains a rich selection of prints, sketches, and watercolours of Worcestershire sites and landscapes spanning the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. Highlights include eighteenth-century plans and views of Kidderminster and Worcester, an elegant watercolour of Pershore Abbey by John Roe, and a striking bird's-eye view of Westwood House by the Dutch engraver Jan Kip.

No One Left Behind – new resources for Worcestershire heritage

As part of the Historic England-funded 'No One Left Behind' project, Museums Worcestershire and Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service have produced a series of free online resources to support heritage organisations and individuals recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Members of WAS and other local archaeology and history societies can find a selection of useful videos and toolkits on the project website (https://www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk/no-one-left-behind/), covering topics as diverse as collections documentation, community engagement, fundraising, and social media marketing.

DARTing through Droitwich's past

Tech-savvy WAS members will be interested to hear of the new Droitwich Spa Augmented Reality Heritage Trail (DART), which launched at the Droitwich Heritage Centre on 27 August. Funded by Wychavon District Council and designed by local firm Steak Festival, DART uses a cutting-edge smartphone app to take visitors on an accessible guided tour of the historic town, led by a cast of characters including local 'Salt King' John Corbett (1817-1901). The app is free to download via the App Store, Google Play, or official DART website (https://thedart.app/).

Skyscapes by Turner, Constable and Rembrandt at Worcester City Art Gallery

Featuring the beautiful, the brooding and the serene, Skyscape at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum celebrates five hundred years of artists' fascination with the sky. Running from 29 January to 26 March 2022, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to view the popular art of landscape from a new perspective, through a succession of masterpieces by artists including Turner, Constable, Rembrandt, Dürer, Paul Nash and many more.

Skyscape showcases over thirty objects from the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Escape the winter cold to enjoy blue skies and majestic sunsets, as we explore the sky and its representations in art as a symbol of the divine, a scientific subject, or a vehicle for emotional expression.

Features

In at the Deep End

Caroline Hillaby

In Spring 2000, while Joe was chairman, he came home from a meeting with the news that he'd offered my services as editor of the *Recorder*, Hal Bethell having retired. I was horrified: I had never done anything similar, and knew nothing about archaeology. However I soon came to enjoy the job, both for the intrinsic interest of the work and for the contact with a wide range of people.

Joe helped me with that first issue, putting me in touch with potential contributors, and Brian Ferris organised Gareth Furlong to do the printing. Joe and I visited local printers for subsequent editions, and found Aldine Press much cheaper than any others. Its owner, Jan Gaca, a Pole, was a great supporter of charities and reduced his price. He took no notes at our meeting, so I was apprehensive when I came to collect, but everything was spot on – he carried it all in his head. Jan was a remarkable man, and I was saddened when he sold to Paul Bullman who started Aldine Print in 2002. But we worked well together, along with Roger Moore; John Holliday tested the price while he was Treasurer.

Until 2005, when we went onto email, all material was sent by mail or fax and had to be typed. For some years we received £10 from the CBA to include flyers, but this meant extra work for the envelope stuffers! History, archaeology and architecture 'working' groups, set up in 1999, were led by Joe and Robin Whittaker, Hal Bethell, and Brian Ferris respectively, but two were short-lived, only Brian's architecture group continuing until the pandemic, from 2014 as the South Bank Group – which he would like to re-start.

Archaeologists are a tenacious lot. Many contributed material throughout my period, and a surprising number of professionals remain in place. James Dinn, who retired in June, kept us informed of what was happening in the city, Chris Guy of events at the Cathedral, and WAAS staff of county news – I hope they, and others, will forgive me for not naming them individually. Until his retirement in February 2011, Robin Whittaker notified us regularly of recent deposits in the Record Office.

Not all has been resilient. Lecture venues have been a recurring problem. In 2000 lack of space was an issue at the Old Palace. Five moves have since been made for different reasons: to the Baptist Church Hall in Sansome Walk, the Blind Association premises in Sansome Place, St George's Church Hall, the Royal Grammar School, and finally to St Peter's Baptist Church. Meetings took place in the afternoon until 2005 when the first evening meeting was held. As members will know, Covid has necessitated lectures being held online. But at least they could go ahead, whereas excursions have had to be cancelled. For several years these included 'away trips' to places ranging from Orkney and Shetland to west Cornwall.

In 2005 Barbara Ronchetti (see *Recorder* 71, pp. 10-11) followed Canon Buchanan-Dunlop in tracing the movements of the Society's remarkable library, from Greyfriars through to the old workshop rooms in the Commandery in 1998, to University College Worcester (later the University of Worcester). The Holland Martin photographs and other original documents went to the County Record Office on loan, and the Aston and Hore collections remained on loan at the City Museum. The library, Barbara believed, *'now has a secure future'*. The Society's books were housed in modern locked rolling-stacks, rare books secured in a steel cupboard, and WAS members were eligible for associate membership of the University College library. Happy days! Barbara was not to know that the move to the Hive in July 2012 would effectively cut the Society off from its library for several years. Peter Walker and David Collier reported in 2018

that it was finally due to join the journal collection at the Hive. Discussions to complete the transfer continue, and the outlook is promising.

The county saw its fair share of changes too. In 2001 the Record Office moved its Library and History Centre into Trinity Street, and material from St Helen's to County Hall; some was temporarily stored in Gloucestershire Record Office. Robin was appointed Archives Manager and Diocesan Archivist following Tony Wherry's retirement in 2004. The County Hall Branch was closed for several months ahead of the opening of its new home, the Hive, in July 2012, when finally all its public services were on one site. Two substantial archives were allocated to the county in lieu of inheritance tax: the internationally significant Croome archive of the earls of Coventry, and the archives of the Lyttelton family of Hagley, including the Habington Manuscript, the first county history of Worcestershire.

Worcestershire Archaeology became Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS) in 2005, and merged with the Record Office at the Hive in 2012 to form Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS). The *Recorder* followed the Hive's progress, from outline planning consent in 2006, to excavation in 2008 *'rewriting the story of Roman Worcester'*, when over 200 local people took part in a community archaeology project, to the start of construction work in 2010 and its final opening in 2012.

Under Victoria's leadership the Service went from strength to strength. In 2013 it was approved as a place of deposit by the National Archives, and was one of only six archives in the country to be awarded accreditation. Four years later it *was 'the clear winner'* of the Record-Keeping Service of the Year award by the Archives and Records Association. This, despite massive budget cuts. 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of a professional archaeological presence in Worcestershire, 1969-74 recalled by James Bond, later days by Alan Hunt, Jan Roberts, Adrian Tindall, Malcolm Cooper, Malcolm Atkin and Victoria Bryant.

The County Museum at Hartlebury Castle, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum and the Commandery came together as Museums Worcestershire, and a restructuring saw the retirement in 2013 of David Kendrick whose enthusiastic contributions have been missed. I hope all goes well with him. A new archaeological gallery opened in 2017, with support from this Society.

The Society supported the Friends of the Hurd Library and Hartlebury Castle, formed in 2007 in response to fears that the Castle could be sold for development, the Bishop's residence having moved to Worcester. Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust was launched in March 2009 and, with the help of a £5m grant from HLF, purchased the Castle in 2014, with a long-term loan of pictures and furniture, including the historic books in the Hurd Library. Following renovations, the Castle opened as a visitor attraction in April 2018, the Hurd Library being managed by the Friends.

Interesting times. In 2002 Worcester Cathedral marked the 500th anniversary of the burial of Prince Arthur with a conference and pilgrimage through the city to the Cathedral for an ecumenical service. 2008 saw the 1,000th anniversary of the birth of Wulfstan. In 2015 events to mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta included a re-enactment, an exhibition, and an academic conference, *'King John: The Worcester Connection'*, organised by Stephen Church, Professor of Medieval History at the University of East Anglia, and the Cathedral. The 750th Anniversary of the Battle of Evesham, 1265, was commemorated in a series of lectures at the Commandery, and a full programme, including lectures by Professor David Carpenter, Katherine Ashe and Dr David Cox, at Evesham. In 2017 Worcester Cathedral received HLF funding to conserve the 12th-century undercroft to College Hall and bring into public use for the first time, a project completed in 2020.

Several hoards were acquired by the County Museum during these two decades, including Severn Stoke, Bredon Hill (the county's largest ever Roman hoard), and the smaller Elmley Lovett and Dodderhill hoards, the latter with donations from WAS and Felicity Marshall. Excavations included the former Royal Worcester Porcelain site, revealing traces of St Peter's church and its burial ground; the high profile 'Lich Street dig'; a very early Beaker burial at Aldington Lodge, Evesham; the Broadway flood alleviation scheme, *'one of the largest excavations carried out in this county in recent years'*; and uncovering the Battle of Worcester near Powick bridge. Among the publications reviewed were *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89,* edited by H. Dalwood & R. Edwards (2004); *Roman Droitwich*, edited by D. Hurst (2006); *Excavations at Newport Street, Worcester, 2005*, edited by P. Davenport (2015); *Huntsman's Quarry, Kemerton*, edited by R. Jackson (2015); *Clifton Quarry, Worcestershire, Investigations 2006-2009,* edited by A. Mann and R. Jackson (2018), the most substantial publication of a prehistoric site from Worcestershire; and *Impinging on the Past: a Rescue Excavation at Fladbury*, *1967,* edited by D.A. Hinton and †D.P.S. Peacock (2020), which highlights the importance of publishing backlog excavations.

On the historical side have been *John Somerset Pakington: His First 50 Years* by A. Harris (2011); *The Diary and Papers of Henry Townshend, 1640-1663*, edited by S. Porter *et al.* (2014), *'probably the single most important source for the study of the civil war in the county'*; *Correspondence of Peter Prattinton of Bewdley, Antiquary, 1807-1840*, edited by I. Robinson (2019); and D. Gilbert's new *Worcestershire's First Historian: Thomas Habington of Hindlip (1560-1647)*, the subject of a day school in 2015, whose chest has been ably researched by Stephen Price and conserved thanks to the Kay Trust, parts dated by dendrochronology to a tree felled in the sixteenth century. (Dendro also dated 31 High Street, Droitwich, to 1340, one of the earliest domestic timber-framed buildings in the county, and Greyfriars, funded by WAS, to 1490)/ Members' publications have included Tim Bridges' *Churches of Worcestershire* (2000; 2005), Margaret Goodrich's *Worcester Nunneries* (2008), Pat Hughes' *The Story of Worcester* (2011), and several books by Mick Wilks and Malcolm Atkin on the defence of Worcester.

The Society celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2004 with a dinner, lectures, and an exhibition in the Commandery. It also reprinted Canon Buchanan-Dunlop's article, 'A Hundred Years, 1854-1954', from *TWAS* NS 30 – well worth a read. *Recorder* 69 includes an article by Robin Whittaker on 150 years of WAS, a list of the publications on view at the exhibition, and a who's who of notable members. Malcolm Atkin reviewed recent developments in archaeological techniques, reassuring us that a trowel, keen eye and questioning mind are still needed. Technological changes continue, Adam Stanford demonstrating in 2019 how aerial reconnaissance photography can enable 3D models to be made.

The *Recorder* has also solved some identification problems. Brian Ferris's query as to where the Cathedral's altar rails had gone was answered by Tim Bridges: they were installed in Holy Trinity Church in Sutton Coldfield in 1874-5.

Inevitably there have been deaths over the period, but we mourned especially Charles Mundy, who died in 2004 aged only 45, and Hal Dalwood in 2015, aged 58.

In putting this together I realise how grateful I am to Joe for landing me this satisfying job. I apologise for omissions and errors but should like to record my thanks to Robin, who kept a close eye on me in the early days, putting me right when I mistook a technical term for a typo, and has been supportive ever since; Peter Walker who found references and illustrations for me; Stephen Price, who could be relied on to provide a filler; and to all contributors. I am delighted to hand over to Murray Andrews, who I know will make an excellent job of it.

Badsey Fields revisited: two more Roman coins from the A.E. Jones collection

Murray Andrews

In a previous edition of the Society's *Transactions* I published an account of 514 Roman coins found in the Vale of Evesham by two local fieldworkers, Arthur Edward Jones (1863-1950) and Peter Stewart (1938-) (Andrews 2018). Since publication two more Roman coins found by Jones at Badsey Fields have been relocated in the collections of Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery, and can be described as follows:

1. Copper-alloy nummus of Constantine I, AD 327-8. RIC VII Treveri 504. Obverse: CONSTAN TINVS AVG, laureate head right. Reverse: PROVI[D]EN TIAE AVGG//STRE, Camp gate with two turrets, star above. Mint of Trier. Die axis 180°. Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery, accession no. 1977.300

2. Copper-alloy nummus of Constantine I, AD 327-8. RIC VII Treveri 504 or 509. Obverse: CONSTAN TINVS AVG, laureate head right. Reverse: [PROVIDEN T]IAE AV[GG]//[...]RE, Camp gate with two turrets, star above. Mint of Trier. Die axis 180°. Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery, accession no. 1977.301

The rediscovery of these *nummi* raises the total number of coins found at the Badsey Fields site to 11. This small assemblage exhibits the mid-fourth century 'peak' in coin loss familiar to many rural settlements from Roman Britain: reasonable parallels can be found in the villa at Rockbourne, Hampshire, as well as the putative villa or rural settlement at Badsey Fields Lane, Worcestershire (Reece 1991; Andrews 2018). An updated summary of the coin-loss profiles for the Vale of Evesham sites, integrating these new specimens, is presented in Table 1 below.[1]

Issue Period	Hanging Ground, Aldington	Badsey Fields	Badsey Fields Lane	Black Banks	Bowers Hill	Badsey (unlocalised)	Childswickham	Cleeve Prior	Fox Hill	Sedgeberrow	South Littleton	Wickhamford
pre-41	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
41-54	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
54-68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
69-96	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
96-117	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
117-138	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
138-161	0	1	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
161-180	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
180-192	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
193-222	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
222-238	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
238-260	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
260-275	0	1	9	5	5	31	2	0	0	0	0	1
275-296	0	0	6	0	2	42	2	0	0	0	0	1
296-317	0	0	2	0	1	6	0	1	1	0	0	1
317-330	0	3	8	1	3	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
330-348	2	4	35	2	7	82	0	1	2	0	0	2
348-364	1	0	15	0	3	32	1	0	5	0	0	2
364-378	0	1	4	1	10	44	2	0	1	1	0	0
378-388	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1
388-402	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2

Table 1: Summary of coin loss profiles for 12 Roman sites in the Vale of Evesham

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Reece, R., 1991 *Roman coins from 140 sites in Britain*, Cirencester.

1. This table corrects an Excel calculation error present in the original publication, which resulted in 'barbarous radiates' being miscounted in issue period 260-275 instead of 275-296.

Remapping Wichenford

Heather Rendall, Wichenford Local Heritage Group

The parish of Wichenford lies approximately 7 miles north-west of Worcester. It is an odd shape, comprising as it does a large broad northern section joined by a narrow neck at Laugherne Bridge to a smaller and less wide southern section. The latter is of considerable age, its southern and western boundaries being described in the 8th-century *Wican* charter (Hooke 1991, 69, no. 9). Whether the top half of the parish is of similar age is unclear; the charter boundary markers become indistinct precisely at Laugherne Bridge, and it is not known exactly which line they follow northwards.

It is a strange fact that the church stands by itself, near but apart from the manor house of Wichenford Court, across the Fitcher Brook: odd because early churches were often built as part of the manor. Just a mile away as the crow flies, the chapel of Kenswick lay only yards from the manor house. Directly to the north and east of the church lay Wichenford Common – no place for a manor, leading one to the probable conclusion that the church pre-dates the establishment of the manor and its estate. This is highly likely because, as with Kenswick, Wichenford numbered among the parishes belonging to St Helens, Worcester, which may have been an early Romano-Celtic foundation (Bassett 1989).

With the building of The Queen's estate and Queensway in 1952, and of bungalows on the opposite side of the road in the 1970s, the parish appeared to have acquired a village centre. But before that time the parish had all the characteristics of a non-nucleated village: *'a settlement pattern made up of scattered farmsteads with hamlets of labourers' cottages at crossroads or alongside patches of waste. Such a pattern was often a feature of wooded or pastoral regions. In the Middle Ages, the [nucleated] villages were often set within the great open fields in which their inhabitants worked their scattered strip holdings, but the dispersed farms were surrounded mainly by enclosed fields'* (Hooke 1995, 95).

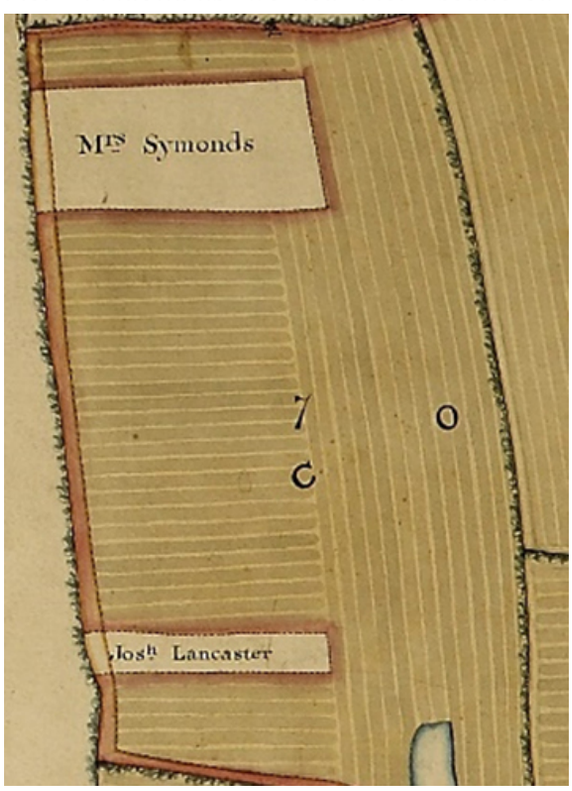

Fig 1. Detail of Bury End Town map, 1834 (© WAAS, BA 438 /13/(i))

Wichenford appeared to present a model of settlement in Ancient Countryside. So we were not expecting to find evidence for open fields or strip farming, but a map of Bury End Town drawn up in 1834 for a Moses James (WAAS BA 438 /13/(i)) clearly shows two strips within a field owned by different people (Fig 1).

That this field was originally divided into strips was further revealed by a Google Earth aerial photo of 1999, which shows the entire field made up of strips. This was not something we had anticipated. So we looked elsewhere for more evidence. We found it in the lower half of the same Moses James map (Fig 2).

Looking at the strange boundaries made up of right angles and other sharp turns, it was obvious that the land below Venn Lane had originally been made up of strips, which over the years had changed hands and, in part, been amalgamated into large plots.

Fig 2: Moses James' map of Bury End Town estate, 1834 (© WAAS, BA 438 /13/(i)). The black X denotes the location of Wichenford Court.

Fig 3a shows the lower half of the same map but with lines drawn north-south as continuation of boundaries existing in 1834. The remains of original strips start to be visible. The bold dotted line east / west indicates the possible extent of meadow land. The Laugherne Brook runs along the southern boundary.

Fig 3b shows larger pieces of land divided up into strips as far as can be determined by boundaries existing in 1834. The line denoting the start of meadow land is inconclusive, so both possibilities have been drawn in. This pattern of open fields both above and below Venn Lane

Fig 3: Minimal (a) and maximal (b) reconstructions of field strips in Bury End Town, Wichenford, based on boundaries visible in the 1834 map (© WAAS, BA 438 /13/(i)).

made us look closer at the lane itself. Today it leads straight into the church and the 'centre' of the village, but this is a fairly new road. Originally the lane was a private gated road to Wichenford Court (see Fig 2) and the main road through the village made a 90º turn north, continuing over Fitcher Brook to meet Guises Lane. A left-hand turn served two cottages and continued up to Kings Green.

Within this block we have records of 2 unnamed cottages, Arundels Farm, Toveys, Meachams, Notts, Bury End Town, The Masons Arms, Castle Hill Cottage, Syms and Abingdon's Place – eleven houses in all. There was also a mill on the Laugherne just off the map to the bottom right. Both Syms and Meachams have disappeared, Toveys, Notts and Abingdon's Place have changed their names. But we think that eleven houses including two ancient freeholds (The Masons Arms and Syms) is enough to postulate that this, in all likelihood, was the centre of Wichenford in medieval times with open fields lying to the north and south of the lane. To the north of the open fields lay a large Common and beyond that a wood which is still encompassed by a deep ditch.

So the people living in medieval Wichenford would have been settled just above the Laugherne with a fair number of open fields for cultivation on either side of the road, access to a common for communal grazing and beyond that a wood maybe used as wood pasture, certainly a source of firewood which was permitted as a customary right of lop and top.

Today's village centre lies nearly a mile away but, as its inhabitants drive home, they drive along the old main road of the village and then along the private road to the Court and on to the church. The final stretch from the church onwards is a relatively new access built across yet another common, lost to enclosure during the 16-17th centuries. They literally drive through history.

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The provenance of two medieval censers from Pershore

Robina Rand and Bruce Watson

Pershore, curiously, is the findspot of two medieval censers: both are antiquarian discoveries, and have been acquired by the British Museum. As medieval censers are not particularly common as archaeological finds, the provenance of these two objects deserves some consideration.

A censer, or thurible, is a hollow metal liturgical vessel in which incense is burnt during religious services. Burning charcoal and grains of incense are placed inside the opened censer, which is then closed and swung on three sets of chains, releasing clouds of sweet-smelling smoke via the openwork upper portion (Murray and Murray 1998, 97). Medieval censers were relatively high-status liturgical items, and were generally owned by wealthier parishes and monastic houses. Pershore Abbey (AD *c*.972-1540) would therefore seem a likely source for any discoveries made within the town. Of the 175 Worcestershire parish churches and chapels surveyed in 1552, only 58 examples (33%) listed censers – mostly described as brass – in their inventories of goods, including St Andrew's in Pershore. Only seven of these churches, including the former abbey of Holy Cross Pershore, possessed two censers (Walters 1955, 57-58).

Fig 1. The earlier Pershore censer (© The Trustees of the British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The earlier Pershore censer (British Museum, acc. no. 1960,0701.1) is stylistically dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century. Cast in copper-alloy and measuring 9.70cm tall, its openwork upper portion takes the form of a miniature building, almost certainly intended to represent a church (Figure 1). At each corner is a perforated lug, which would have connected with matching lugs on the missing lower portion to secure the two halves of the vessel. The miniature building bears an inscription which translates as: 'Godric made me'. When a line drawing of this censer was published in 1779, it was stated that *'this piece of antiquity was found a few years ago during the digging of a cellar near the middle of the town of Pershore in Worcestershire'* (Anon 1779, 536). Notes in the British Museum archive by Rev. Thomas Beale, curate of Bengeworth in 1772-93 and the original owner of the censer, state that it was discovered within *'a mass of gravel'* – presumably Quaternary sand and gravel – during the digging of a town cellar between 1759 and 1769. This description implies that the censer was found within an unrecognised sub-surface archaeological feature like a pit or well. It appears that only the upper portion of the censer was discovered, and no other associated objects were recovered or documented. In 1906 the censer was in the possession of Mr O. G. Knapp of Mansion House, latterly the Evesham Hotel, in Bengeworth (Romilly Allen 1906, 188). It was eventually acquired by the British Museum in 1960.

Fig 2. The later Pershore censer (© The Trustees of the British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The later Pershore censer (British Museum, acc. no. 1924,0307.1) is dated to *c.*1200, and is probably of North German manufacture. It is complete, and consists of a 20cm tall hollow copper-alloy openwork sphere, which opens horizontally in its centre (Figure 2). The upper portion of the censer is topped by a miniature building, presumably a church. This building has a cruciform plan with twin openings on each gable, and a central tower with a conical roof surmounted by a bird, possibly intended to represent the Holy Spirit. The lower portion of the censer has a foot or base, which would have allowed it to have been set on surfaces without falling and spilling hot incense. The two halves of the censer are secured by perforated lugs.

When this censer was first exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries in March 1870, it was described as being of probable fourteenth-century date, but its findspot and date of discovery were not recorded (Morgan 1870, 485). However, when the censer was exhibited a second time in March 1877, it was described as having been *'found in Pershore in 1856 among a heap of old metal in a founder's yard and said to have been dug up near the abbey church'*, and was redated by J.T. Micklethwaite to the twelfth century (Scott 1877, 191).

When the two Pershore churchyards at the Abbey and St Andrews were put up for sale in October 1838, the inhabitants of Pershore raised the money to buy them and stop them being used for the 'Fairs'. The townsfolk also purchased a number of small houses on the east and south sides of Broad Street and razed them to the ground, creating an open space, free of toll, where the town's fairs could be held instead (*Berrow's Worcester Journal,* 25 July 1931). If this censer was found in *c.*1840 (which is uncertain), then, it might possibly have been discovered during landscaping work on the one of the cemeteries or during the demolition of the Bridge Street properties.

In July 1885, after seeing the Ripple censer exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries, the same Mr Micklethwaite decided that a 15th century date for the Pershore example was actually more probable (Bazeley 1886, 149). By 1885 the later Pershore censer was described as in the possession of the late William Niven FSA. This information concerning the provenance of the later Pershore censer and Micklethwaite's comments have been reiterated by Bazeley (1886, 149), Houghton (1922, 176-7) and others.

Pershore Abbey formerly sold postcards of the later censer, which had some printed information on the reverse: THE PERSHORE THURIBLE *This thurible or censer was dug up within the area of the precinct of Pershore Abbey in 1860. It is the only known relic of any importance of the many Ecclesiastic Vessels which the Monastery unquestionably possessed. Its date is probably the late 12th C. It is made in bronze in two heavy sections, the lower to hold the*

charcoal upon which the incense was thrown. It was as usual swung by 3 chains and the holes for these may be seen. The finial at the top is a dove of somewhat archaic form. It was purchased by the British Museum in 1924. Height 8½ ins. Globe 4 ½ ins. diameter F. B.A.

The initials stand for Francis B. Andrews (*d.*1936), who was the abbey's architect for many years. The discovery date of 1860 cited by Andrews appears to be a mistake, and his provenance assumes that the censer must have come from the abbey. A discovery date of 1840 and a findspot in the abbey grounds, as cited by Barrett and Wilson (1980, 29) and Bridges (2005, 182), seems more plausible; interestingly, their provenance seems to be based on Andrew's assumption. The impression is that the later censer was also discovered by workmen during groundworks within the historic town and was then surreptitiously sold by them as scrap metal. Presumably the scrap merchant suspected that the censer was of some antiquity and showed it to an antiques dealer, who purchased it possibly as early as about 1856, but certainly before 1870. In 1924 this object was acquired by the British Museum.

To conclude, it is likely that these two censers were discovered outside the abbey precinct during groundworks, implying they were buried within unrecognised archaeological features of some description. When and why these two censers were apparently buried on secular properties within Pershore is not clear. It is possible is that both the censers may have originally belonged either to the town's abbey or St Andrew's Church until the Reformation. There is evidence that a variety of banned liturgical goods and statues were being concealed during the reign of Edward VI (1547-53) to prevent their confiscation or destruction and this material has only been rediscovered centuries later by accident, but often the provenance of these finds is poorly recorded and therefore misunderstood (Watson 2021). For instance, it is likely that a medieval censer which was discovered in *c.*1847-48 inside Ripple parish church had been concealed under the floor during the Reformation (see article in *Recorder* 103, p.12-14).

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The Ripple Censer described

Bruce Watson

The Ripple censer is currently on loan to Worcester Cathedral Treasury, where it was recorded and photographed by the author in November 2021. The aim of this article is publish a brief summary of this work. From a visual examination the censer (Fig 1) appears to be either copper-alloy or a related alloy like brass or latten. On stylistic grounds it is of thirteenth-century date.

Fig 1. The Ripple censer (Author's photograph)

The Ripple censer (total height 172mm, external diameter of circular portion about 110mm), consists of an upper lower portion, both with three sets of matching lugs (115mm apart), which originally held the missing suspension chains. With the lowest portion of the domed base is a roughly circular hole (35mm diameter), which was possibly caused by the removal of a foot or base (like the Pershore example). A base would have allowed the vessel to be stood upright without tipping over and spilling burning charcoal and incense. The only decoration on the lower portion consists of an almost continuous band of engraved decoration close to the rim, All of the engraving is very irregular and poorly executed.

The top portion of the Ripple censer is of openwork design, and is topped by a miniature church. Its outside is smooth or burnished, while the interior is badly stained. Close to the rim there is another almost continuous band of engraved decoration. Again, this engraving is very irregular and poorly executed. In line with the lugs is a triangular arrangement of prominent linear ridges, which serve to separate the openwork areas from the miniature church. Each of the three semi-circular panels defined by the ridges is dominated by a complex pattern of open work, which consists of a Maltese cross type arrangement of four slightly irregular equilateral triangles, each separated by short oblongs, with two additional oblongs to the left and right of the central arrangement. The three roughly triangular shapes defined by the ridges directly above each lug are infilled with more openwork. The top of the upper portion of the censer is dominated by a miniature cruciform church (structure 73mm high), with a prominent central spire topped by a tiny lug (Fig. 2). In the gable of each wing of the church are two openings.

Fig 2. Detail of the miniature church on top of the Ripple censer (Author's photograph)

The two halves of the Ripple censer do not fit together tightly, and the very irregular and poorly executed nature of the engraving on the two rims and slightly lopsided appearance of the miniature church all convey the impression of a poor-quality artefact produced either by an apprentice or an unskilled craftsman.

The Effect of the American Revolutionary War on Kidderminster

Don Gilbert

The impact of what is sometimes also called the War of American Independence on the town of Kidderminster has featured only marginally in what has been written about the history of the town in modern times.[1] But that impact seems to have been devastating and disastrous.

The main source for what happened is the 18th-century historian of Worcestershire, Dr. Treadway Russell Nash.[2] Nash is often careless and inaccurate, but when he is fully engaged with a subject, he is impressive in his analysis. Also, he was in this instance describing events of his own time which he was able to check (from personal knowledge, contemporary newspapers, etc).

Most of what he says of the effects of the war comes, not in his main volumes (published 1781-82), but in the Supplement to them, published in 1799. Internal evidence would suggest that this section of the Supplement was written down in 1782 (he does not know that all ten regiments were disbanded in 1783, at the end of the war).[3] He says that in 1775-80 ten new regiments, given the regimental numbers 85-94, were raised in England and that these were sent *'within a few months of each other'* to serve as garrison troops in the West Indies. He calculated that of the *c*.7000 men sent out in 1778-79 there were only about 1000 surviving in 1782. All the regiments were 'drafted', that is had to be replenished, so weak had they become.

He adds the information (though there is some ambiguity) that the 87th, 88th and 89th regiments were *'[in] great part raised in Worcestershire, principally at Kidderminster'*.[4] Nash seems to have simplified the complexities of the recruitment of these three regiments, but there can be no doubt that they recruited heavily in the town, and that Kidderminster suffered a heavy, if unquantifiable, loss in the years 1779-83.

George Waldegrave, 4th Earl Waldegrave (© National Portrait Gallery, London, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0)

The 87th (Lord Winchilsea's Foot) was recruited in Bromsgrove and Kidderminster by the Hon. George Finch, later the 9th Earl of Winchilsea (1752-1826).[5] He would seem to have spent some £20,000 of his own money on the regiment, and he served with the regiment, holding the rank of Major and then Lieutenant-Colonel. Its commanding officer in 1779-83 was Lieutenant-Colonel George Waldegrave, 4th Earl Waldegrave. We are in a world where wealthy aristocrats patriotically funded new regiments, but also bought commissions, promotions, and commands, sometimes with disastrous results, and other abuses abounded. The 88th (Keating's Foot) was also partially raised in Kidderminster, and the 91st (Acland's Foot) was raised in Worcestershire and Shropshire.[6]

The revolt of the American colonies was transformed in 1778 by the alliance between the

View of St Lucia, taken 31 December 1778 (British Library, public domain)

Americans and the French, and the contribution of the French navy was particularly crucial. The main fighting in the West Indies was intermittent naval and military engagements against the French, and later the Dutch and Spanish; and so valuable were the British possessions in the West Indies (particularly the sugar plantations) that the overstretched British forces, fighting a war in both America and the West Indies, had to be rapidly reinforced by the new regiments, whose task was to protect those West Indian possessions.

In the case of the 89th regiment (Cary's Foot), we are indebted to an excellent study by J Robert Williams.[7] Its first commander was the Hon. Lucius Cary, later Earl of Falkland. It was mainly recruited in Kidderminster, where it was stationed between August and October 1779. It served in Barbados, St. Lucia, and Tobago. In December 1778 British forces seized St. Lucia from the French, and would repel later French attacks on the island; but the 89th suffered *'heavy losses'* in the notorious hurricane of San Calixto (which killed in all about 22,000 people in its passage through the Caribbean) on 11th October 1780. Fortescue says that *'every building was unroofed, [and] the sick were lying in pools of water'*. It also suffered badly by reason of disease and other tropical storms. A 1781 petition to Lord Amherst, the Commander in Chief, refers to *'distresses'*, even *'ruin'*.[8]

The main reason why so many Kidderminster men volunteered in 1778-79 was the parlous state of the cloth industry in the town, which, after a boom period in the 1750s and 1760s, had fallen on evil days in the 1770s, the number of looms producing silk and worsted articles having fallen from 1700 to 700 (the emerging carpet industry was apparently not affected by this decline). Unemployed weavers were bound to be attracted by the prospect of army pay, together with the bounties that were probably also on offer. In many cases their wives and children accompanied them to the West Indies. Nash says that *'the women and children were numerous in the train of these regiments and swell the loss very considerably'*.

The loss is, as said above, ultimately unquantifiable. But once again Nash casts some light on the question. At one point he remarks that the population of Kidderminster in 1780 was at least 700 fewer than in 1773. He also suggests that the trade decline of the 1770s was at least partly due to the *'unfortunate war which still continues'*.[9] By 1783, when the war ended, the situation must have been far worse, in terms of loss (human and financial) to the town of Kidderminster.

Notes

1. See JR Burton, *Kidderminster* (1890), 181; Nigel Gilbert, *A History of Kidderminster* (2004), 69.

2. TR Nash, *Collections for a History of Worcestershire* (1781-82). Hereafter 'Nash'.

3. Nash, Supplement (1799) and vol. 2, 'Corrections and Additions' (1799), L42. Volumes 1 and 2 were also reprinted in 1799 and volume 2 carried the 'Corrections and Additions'.

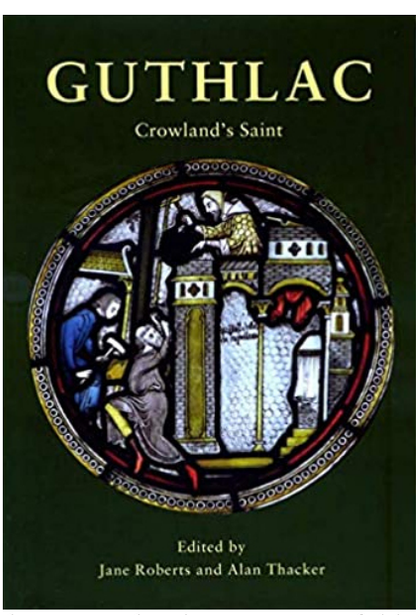
4. The ambiguity comes from the list of the regiments in Nash. Of the 87th regiment he says what is quoted above, and beneath this and, next to his mention of the 88th, *'Part raised in ditto'*, and, below that, of the 89th, *'Raised in ditto'*. Does 'ditto' refer to Worcestershire or to Kidderminster? It seems more natural to take it as referring to Kidderminster, especially as the addition as a whole relates to that place.

5. On George Finch and Lucius Cary, see GE Cockayne (ed.), *Complete Peerage***,** under, respectively, 'Winchilsea' and 'Falkland'. The Earl of Winchilsea, who raised the 87th, was a keen cricketer, and a lot of cricket was played by the soldiers in the West Indies in 1779-83. He was later one of those responsible for the moving the Marylebone Cricket Club, of which he was Treasurer, to 'Mr. Lord's ground' in St John's Wood in London, where it remains.

6. On these regiments see Sir John Fortescue's *History of the British Army* (1906-33; in 14 volumes) XI, 296.

Book Reviews

***Guthlac: Crowland's Saint.* Edited by J. Roberts and A. Thacker. Shaun Tyas, Donington, 2020. Pp. 672, illus. Price £45.00 Hb, £28.00 Pb. ISBN 9781907730832.**



Robin Whittaker

This volume of twenty-five articles, with an appendix giving an edition and translation of the twelfth-century *Translation and Miracles of St Guthlac*, has its genesis in a 2014 conference on all aspects of the life, literature, and cult of St Guthlac. The contributions are divided into five sections, 'Felix's *Life of St Guthlac*', 'Mercia, East Anglia and the Early Cult', 'Verse, Song and Image', 'Crowland and Guthlac Churches', and 'Historical Writing at Crowland and the Later Cult'. This beautifully-produced volume is likely to tell you all that is currently known about St Guthlac, but while it may be objected that this is not very relevant to Worcestershire, there is in fact much that is of great interest to the researcher into aspects of this county and region.

Whilst he is mainly associated with East Anglia, Guthlac has strong Mercian connections, being of a princely Mercian line and having a career as a warrior in the Midlands before changing direction and becoming a hermit in the fens. His death merits a mention in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 714, and within a generation his *Life* had been written by one Felix, possibly at the behest of the East Anglian king Ælfwald; but, as the *Life* focuses more upon the Mercian

elite, maybe at that of the Mercian king Æthelbald. This raises interesting questions about the relationship of a dominant Mercia with the East Anglian royal dynasty, which are interestingly explored by one of the contributors, Joseph Grossi. Of even greater relevance to our area is the article by Morn Capper on what St Guthlac's *Life* tells us about the relationship between the invading Anglians and the native Britons in this area in the seventh century. Guthlac's early career as a warrior fighting along what is now the Welsh border, and the possibility of his role in inter-dynastic rivalries and fighting in the Mercian royal family (maybe leading firstly to his entering the church at Repton and later seeking his hermitage in the fens), are hinted at in the *Life*. This has implications for the position of a separate kingdom of the Hwicce within the growing power of greater Mercia in this period.

There is also much of local interest in the articles that explore the cult of, and churches dedicated to, St Guthlac. Julia Barrow's contribution explores the minster of St Guthlac in Hereford, *'a richly endowed and quite prominent royal minster church'*. However, by the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries royal interest waned and the minster declined. The spread of Guthlac's reputation is interesting, and the volume explores where churches dedicated to him are found and the appearance of his feast in the calendars of religious houses. His reputation was such that two surviving Old English poems in the Exeter Book are dedicated to his life. At a much more specifically local level, it is possible that the Abbot Wilfrid that Felix corresponded with and who is cited as a major source for the Life is the same person as Bishop Wilfrith of Worcester (AD 718-743x5), and Worcester may well have been a centre that produced copies of the Life. Worcester also produced the only surviving record of an acrostic poem in the saint's honour, originally inscribed on the saint's shrine.

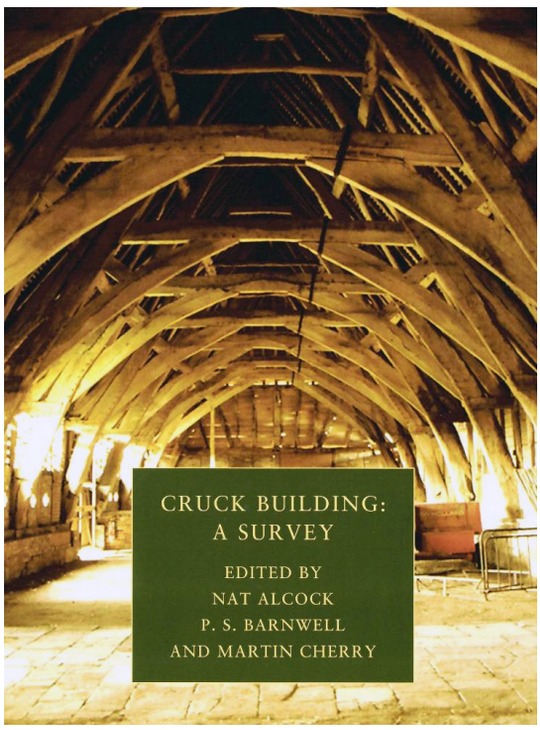
I have deliberately concentrated on the local relevance of the studies in this ambitious volume. However, it also has so much to offer to people interested in a wide range of topics, such as Old English poetry, saints' lives, historical writing in the Middle Ages and, in an article by Elizabeth Danbury of particular interest to me, the forgery of copies of Anglo-Saxon charters.

***Cruck building: a survey*. Edited by N. Alcock, P.S. Barnwell and M. Cherry. Rewley House Studies in the Historic Environment 11. Shaun Tyas, Donington, 2019. Pp. 406. Price £50. ISBN 9781907730795.**

Stephen Price

The publicity for this impressive volume tells us *'this book has evolved from a conference held at Rewley House in Oxford in 2017, which reviewed our knowledge of cruck construction, last surveyed in 1981'*. Its fifteen chapters, written by leading experts in the field, provide welcome contributions on the niceties of cruck construction in all its forms, distribution, and dating. As such, it is both authoritative and thought-provoking.

Dr Nat Alcock, the doyen of cruck studies, begins in Chapter 1, 'The Discovery of Crucks', with an overview of the different types of cruck and related forms, providing an invaluable and clearly illustrated summary. He traces the origins of architectural interest in crucks to the late eighteenth century, when antiquarians first drew attention to a form of *'forked building'*, sometimes described as *'very rough, strong, uncouth, and put together in a rude manner'*. Later writers like Sidney Addy and C. F. Innocent made important contributions by highlighting many more examples and thus widening the distribution. A growing awareness of the value of traditional buildings led to the formation of the Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG) in 1954; its journal has been the principal medium for publishing and developing many of the ideas now



fully developed in this volume, while its annual conference still provides invaluable opportunities for onsite observation and debate over the niceties of all types of traditional buildings.

The study of cruck buildings has developed enormously since the 1960s due to increased fieldwork, leading to a national database and the application of scientific dating methods. The first element can be seen by the work of VAG members recording and reporting crucks in all their forms to the county-by-county lists started in 1958, developed further in 1973 and updated in a new edition published by the Council for British Archaeology in 1981. This current volume contains a map of the distribution of all known true crucks, and while the overall pattern largely confirms that established in the 1970s, the increase in individual numbers is astonishing: 400 in 1958 to nearly 4,500 in 2019, a tribute to Nat Alcock's skills of recruiting many hundreds of correspondents and co-ordinating the results. At the same time as the mapping of crucks has grown exponentially, dendrochronology has provided a scientific basis for understanding the chronology of crucks in all their forms. We learn that almost 400 tree-ring dates have now been obtained for full cruck buildings in England and Wales, representing about 10% of the total crucks known. While the dates obtained range between the thirteenth and early eighteenth centuries, there is a very high concentration from fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Many Worcestershire readers will recognise the dust wrapper photograph of the interior of Leigh Court Barn, one of the country's architectural treasures and a magnificent example of base cruck construction. Freddie Charles's *Medieval Cruck-Building and its Derivatives*, published as a monograph by the Society for Medieval Archaeology in 1967, focused on crucks and base crucks in Worcestershire. Here he is credited as being the first to demonstrate that cruck trusses were assembled on the ground and then reared into position. Base crucks are also the subject of Bob Meeson's Chapter 4, which sets out their chronology in relation to true crucks, showing that dendro-dated base crucks range from the mid-thirteenth century to a peak between 1300 and 1325, with a few hybrids built in the fifteenth century. By contrast, the data for true crucks shows how a handful of the earliest are from the late thirteenth century, but most date from after 1400 and continue until after 1700. This data provides very welcome context for the eight base cruck buildings recorded so far in Worcestershire: three barns and five open halls. Of the latter, all five were high status buildings. Two of them, Stourport Road (Bewdley) and The Hyde (Stoke Bliss), have now produced dendro felling dates placing them in the early fourteenth century, enabling their significance to be seen in the wider chronology of base crucks.

Helping the reader through the typology and structural details of crucks with what may initially appear to be its own preferred terminology is Dan Miles's Chapter 2, '*The 'Nuts and Bolts' of Cruck Construction'*, written with scholarship and practical knowledge based on many years of experience as a scientist and buildings archaeologist.

Chapter 13, *'The Afterlife of Cruck Houses: Modernisation and Obsolescence in North Wales'*, by Martin Cherry and Peter Thompson, takes an innovative approach to cruck studies by

examining what happened to cruck-built houses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The authors reveal *'startingly varied chronologies even between houses of similar status within a short distance of each other'*. Change took many forms. Some were adapted by flooring over the hall and building chimneys with fireplaces to ground and upper floors, while others, like the hall at Maenan, Caernarfonshire, retained their open halls but were covered by exquisite decorative plasterwork. To some owners the retention of the hall, perhaps with a decorative makeover, provided continuity of its symbolic status of its ceremonial purpose, a feature which has been paralleled in England in the merchant houses of the Bristol and London urban elite. For other owners the desire to modernise, create space and privacy, or follow fashion were the motivators. It is refreshing to learn that the extensive programme of fieldwork in North Wales has shown that the traditional orthodoxy for dating the flooring over the medieval hall in the sixteenth century may need revision, as we are given examples to show that *'in some cases the urge to modernise came shortly after a house was built, sometimes very shortly indeed, perhaps even as the house was under construction'*.

It is impossible in the space of a review to do justice to the many other fascinating contributions in this volume, but here are a few examples to show that this will become the standard work on the subject for many years to come. The documentary evidence for crucks is set out by Alcock in Chapter 5; Paul Barnwell (Chapter 14) speculates whether woodland management and differences in timber supplies across the country could relate to the distribution of cruck buildings; and Mark Gardiner (Chapter 3) examines the below-ground archaeological evidence, discussing whether excavated sites can prove whether the earliest crucks were supported on padstones and, more controversially, were ground-fast. Chapter 15 provides an overview of current understanding, concluding that *'after half a century and more of detailed research, we now recognise cruck construction as a key component of medieval peasant housing and can see strong indications of its having had a much superior status in its origins. We have added greatly to the evidence and refined the questions but, despite this, definitive answers remain elusive'*. As one of those VAG contributors to the growing list of crucks for Worcestershire in the 1970s, this reviewer applauds this seminal work. New readers should not be daunted by the intricacies of structural detail and terminology, but see this book as a pathway to greater understanding of life in medieval and early modern Britain.

Worcestershire's First Historian: Thomas Habington of Hindlip (1560-1647). **By D. Gilbert. Aspect Design, Malvern, 2020. Price £18 + £3 p&p. ISBN 9781912078158.**

Robin Whittaker

When the Worcestershire Historical Society was formed in 1893 it was for a time suggested it would be called The Habington Society in honour of Thomas Habington, the first historian of the county. Generations of historian and antiquaries, such as Thomas and Nash, had used his manuscript work after his death, but his name was little known outside these circles. Unlike many of his fellow county historians of the seventeenth century, Habington never put his work into a state ready for publication. In recent years the most useful summary of his work has been the chapter by Dr David Cox on Worcestershire in *A Guide to English County*

Histories (1997), but now Don Gilbert, who knows more about Habington than any other scholar, and has been publishing articles about him for many years, has put the fruits of all this research into a book-length study, and we can all be grateful to him that Habington can now take a more prominent place on the stage of Worcestershire history.

Gilbert stresses that this is not a biography of the man, but purely a study of his historical endeavours, but does comment that such a study would be well merited. As a Roman Catholic, Habington was subject to all the many problems and dangers such a faith brought with it in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Indeed, Habington was sentenced to death for his part in harbouring Jesuit priests in the many priest holes at his house at Hindlip in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, only be saved from the scaffold by the intervention of his brother-in-law. For Gilbert, the significance of his recusancy also lies in the way it was a factor in facilitating a network of local gentry on whom he relied a great deal for his information, many of whom were also Roman Catholic. Indeed, Habington claims the motive for the work was to refute claims that the county *'contained few gentlemen of antiquity'*. He placed great emphasis on the nobility and gentry of the county and the importance they held for him as exemplars of how the upper classes should act.

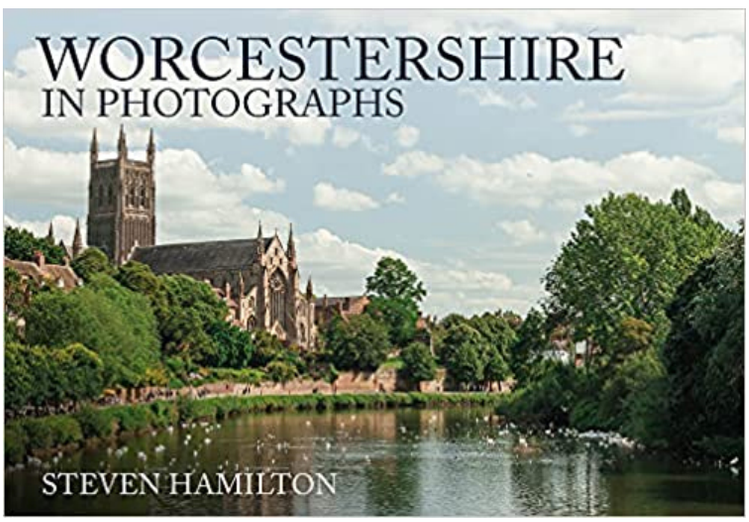
Networks of various sorts played a key role in Habington's endeavours, and Gilbert skilfully places him in the wider national context of similar antiquaries, with many of whom he corresponded. These included such famous names as William Dugdale, Sir Simon Archer and, perhaps most of all, William Burton. Gilbert has read all the surviving correspondence in the various repositories in which it is held, such as the Bodleian Library and Burlington House, and this enables him to give us a new and expanded view of exactly how systematic Habington was in tracking down sources, and gives us a new respect for his achievement. The question of sources is a key one, and Gilbert teases out exactly how Habington sought to assess their reliability. He was suspicious of pedigrees created by the heralds for clients, weighed the importance of private as opposed to public records (both of church and state) and was also open to oral evidence, but only when he felt the source was reliable. Gilbert traces the shifting emphases in Habington's work and objectives as he moved towards realising that he should aim at a full county history. It is sobering to realise that much of his busiest periods of research were carried out when he was in his seventies, and he stresses just how much effort was needed to travel to so many churches to record inscriptions and stained glass.

Gilbert has also done us all a great service by definitively setting out exactly what manuscripts survive, where they are and what they contain. He traces the often complex routes by which different parts of Habington's papers ended up in different places and with different people. He tells the long and tortuous tale of the various proposals and plans over many years to get the work finally published, culminating in the eventual publication of a version of the *Survey* by the Worcestershire Historical Society, edited by another eminent scholar, John Amphlett of Clent, between 1893 and 1895. He gives due credit to the work Amphlett did, but also clearly points out ways in which this edition does not do full justice to what Habington wrote, or necessarily reflect how he himself might have arranged a published version. He does note, however, that if it had been prepared for publication we might well have lost much of what he wrote, and which now survives to us, in the editing process.

Gilbert includes many telling quotations displaying Habington's distinctively Elizabethan prose style. He also addresses the question of what importance Habington has for us as contemporary historians. He recorded many monuments and much stained glass that is now long lost to us, either through decay or, particularly, through the ravages of civil war and religious zealotry.

Though born in Sussex, Habington can be described as a *'Worcestershire chauvinist'*, and we can all be grateful that he was so passionate about his adopted county. We can also be grateful to Don Gilbert for bringing together in this volume so much of his peerless knowledge of this subject. My only regret is that copies of the WHS edition are now hard to come by (I was fortunate enough to get a copy through a second-hand book dealer many years ago), so Habington's work is still mainly known only by specialists.

***Worcestershire in Photographs*. By S. Hamilton. Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2021. Pp. 128, illus. Price £17.99. ISBN 9781445696034.**



Robin Whittaker

Amberley Publishing continues to issue attractive books relating to the county. The latest is a book of contemporary colour photographs of the county. Whilst this may be of only marginal interest to the local historian, it is still a very attractive volume which reflects the many and varied facets of the county, from atmospheric views of Bredon and the Malverns to townscapes, churches and parks. I would have liked a list of the photographs at the beginning, but as it is the reader can browse and enjoy each new image as the pages are turned, and will certainly come away with a keen awareness of the sheer variety and beauty of this county.

Berghahn Books have recently published a paperback edition of **Brian Hoggard**'s 2019 study of *Magical House Protection: the Archaeology of Counter-Witchcraft*. The book provides a fascinating review of twenty years of study into concealed shoes, dried cats, witch bottles, and other forms of protection found in post-medieval houses. Copies are available from the author (http://www.apotropaios.co.uk/shop.html) or via the publisher (https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/HoggardMagical) for £23.95.

The British Institute of Organ Studies has published **Jim Berrow**'s new book, *The Making of an English Organ Builder: John Nicholson of Worcester.* The book recovers the life and work of John Nicholson (1815-95), who founded a successful organ-building business in Worcester in 1841. His output represents some of the finest and most adventurous of Victorian organ-building, and typifies the energy and enterprise of the best of British nineteenth-century organ builders. Copies are available from the British Institute of Organ Studies (www.bios.org.uk) for £25 plus p&p.

WAS 2021-22 Lecture Programme

Meetings take place at 7.30pm. Zoom video-conferencing will be used up to and including 10 January, after which it is hoped to resume in-person meetings in a venue to be announced. Instructions about how to join Zoom meetings will be emailed to members in advance.

20 September	**'Worcestershire Church Bells - Craftsmanship and Sound'**
	Chris Pickford
11 October	**'Westwood House, Droitwich: Sir John 'Lusty' Pakington and his Grand Design'**
	Nick Molyneux (Historic England)
1 November	**'Grown in the Vale - Hidden Tales of Market Gardening'**
	Nina O'Hare (WAAS)
22 November	**'Shrewsbury Castle and Other Shire-Town Castles'**
	Nigel Baker
13 December	**'It's just a load of old rubbish: an archaeological study of industrial waste from the Worcester Porcelain Factories'**
	Helen Loney and Andrew Hoaen (University of Worcester)
10 January	**'Crime, Poverty and Pub Licencing: Local Petitioning in Worcestershire, *c.*1600-1800'**
	Brodie Waddell (Birkbeck, University of London)
31 January	**'Ringing the Dead to Heaven: Worcester Cathedral and the Lost Belltower of St Michael'**
	Michael Shapland (Archaeology South-East / UCL Centre for Applied Archaeology)
21 February	**'Europe's Lost Frontiers - the Archaeology of Doggerland'**
	Vince Gaffney (University of Bradford)
14 March	**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by: 'Eat Like Your Ancestors: the Archaeology of Food and Farmed Landscape and the Future of Food (a West Midlands Perspective)**
	Liz Pearson Mann (WAAS)
4 April	**'Tewkesbury Abbey: the Archaeology and History of a Great Medieval Benedictine Abbey in the West'**
	Ellie March (University of Exeter)
25 April	**THE BERKELEY LECTURE: 'An Excavation in Fladbury Revisited'**
	David Hinton (University of Southampton)

Items for the next issue should be sent to the Editor by **1 March 2022**. Submissions are via email at recorder@worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk.